

# N. Valley residents get detailed look at Loop 303 plans

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A new 14-mile stretch of the Loop 303 freeway would give north Valley drivers easier access to I-10 and California as early as 2012.

Many of the Phoenix residents who attended a public meeting this week at Sandra Day O'Connor High School in north Phoenix were excited about the new route, but a few were not so pleased about living adjacent to the freeway.

Details of the final design for the \$311 million plan were unveiled at a public meeting. Nearly 50 people came out to listen to a presentation of the two-part plan.

Construction of the first part, or interim plan, will begin as early as 2009, extending the northern section of the Loop 303 from Happy Valley Parkway to connect with I-17 with a four-lane, divided freeway.

"Drivers will be able to go from I-17 to the I-10 on the Loop 303," said Tim Tait, community relations director for the Arizona Department of Transportation. "And that's a big achievement."

The plans were presented through a power point presentation with additional maps and displays and project designers on hand to answer questions.

Brian Bielick, 32, of northwest Phoenix, was excited about the plan.

"I think it's great. I think it's going in at the right time to keep traffic moving," said Bielick, who lives in the area. "If you look up, there is not a lot of development now, but it's coming and so we need a lot of roads to move traffic. Usually municipalities wait till development comes and then try to shoe horn something in. They are doing it the right way."

The final part of the plan will include a six-lane divided freeway. The completion of the Loop 303 is one element of the Regional Transportation Plan, a comprehensive program of voter-approved transportation improvements through 2025.

Not everyone was pleased with the plan.

Jeanine Porter, 46, of Phoenix, has a home near where the freeway will be built. She said she would not have purchased her home, had she known the freeway would be built

nearby.

"I realize the Valley is growing and I voted for the plan," said Porter, a nurse who doesn't believe she will even use the new road. "I just didn't think it would go up in my backyard."